© Crown copyright • www.metoffice.gov.uk

Coldest winter for a decade

25 February 2009

Mild weather is expected to see out what remains of winter. Despite this, it is expected to be the coldest UK winter since 1995/96, according to provisional Met Office figures.

The low temperatures have also been accompanied at times by heavy snow. During early February, the heaviest snowfall for 18 years was experienced over many areas of the UK.

Mean temperatures (in degrees Celsius) across the UK.

	Mean temperature 1/12/2008 to 23/02/2009	Average winter temperature (1971 to 2000)	December to February 2007/8	December to February 1995/96
UK	2.9 °C	3.7 °C	4.9 °C	2.5 °C
England	3.2 °C	4.1 °C	5.5 °C	2.8 °C
Northern Ireland	3.7 °C	4.3 °C	5.5 °C	3.7 °C
Scotland	2.3 °C	2.7 °C	3.6 °C	1.8 °C
Wales	3.2 °C	4.2 °C	5.5 °C	2.8 °C

Some low night time minimum temperatures from across the UK were also recorded this winter.

Location	Temperature
Aviemore, Highland	-18.4 °C
Benson, Oxfordshire	-11.8 °C
Shap Fell, Cumbria	-11.3 °C
South Farnborough, Hampshire	-10.8 °C
Sennybridge, Powys	-10.4 °C
Pembrey Sands, Carmarthenshire	-10.4 °C
Yeovilton, Somerset	-9.7 °C
Woodford, Greater Manchester	-9.6 °C
Culdrose, Cornwall	-7.8 °C

Although cold, this year's low temperatures are put into context when compared to the all-time minimum figures for the UK nations.

	Lowest daily temperature records		
Scotland	-27.2 °C	11 February 1895 10 January 1982 30 December 1995	Braemar (Aberdeenshire) Braemar (Aberdeenshire) Altnaharra (Highland)
England	-26.1 °C	10 January 1982	Newport (Shropshire)
Wales	-23.3 °C	21 January 1940	Rhayader (Powys)
Northern Ireland	-17.5 °C	1 January 1979	Magherally (County Down)

The cold weather has been in contrast to the run of very mild winter temperatures that have been recorded over recent years.

Natural variability of climate means that the UK will continue to see spells of colder weather at times. Although, if it had not been for the general warming already observed in global temperatures, this winter may well have been even colder.

Peter Stott, Climate Scientist at the Met Office, said: "Despite the cold winter this year, the trend to milder and wetter winters is expected to continue, with snow and frost becoming less of a feature in the future.

"The famously cold winter of 1962/63 is now expected to occur about once every 1,000 years or more, compared with approximately every 100 to 200 years before 1850."

Notes to editors:

- Meteorologically, winter is regarded as the months of December, January and February.